



Educational Opportunities in Glacier National Park for 2007 - 2008



Dear Educator:

The education staff at Glacier National Park would like to welcome you back to school and remind you about our “Parks as Classrooms” education programs. These programs are designed to merge your educational goals and objectives with the nationally significant natural and cultural resources found in Glacier. This fall and winter, we will continue to offer ranger-led programs in the following areas on both west and east sides of the park. Student learning objectives and schedules for each of these field trips can be found on our website at <http://www.nps.gov/glac/forteachers/>.

Senses, Habitats & Wildlife (Grades K- 2) Spring & Fall

This program uses the forest, aquatic, and grassland habitats found in the park to help young students learn about habitat requirements, plant and animal growth stages, and the national park mission of protecting habitat.

West Side: The day can include a puppet show, Discovery Cabin stations with hands-on examination of animal artifacts, a short hike on the Oxbow Trail, and a ranger-led concluding activity.
Note: Kindergarten programs are half-day with a ranger, and the rest of the day with teacher-led activities.

East Side: The day will include activities along hiking trails appropriate to the students’ ages and abilities. The Beaver Pond Trail and the Sun Point Trail at St. Mary, the Lubec and Mt. Henry Trails out of East Glacier, and the South Shore Trail at Two Medicine are the ideal length for these ages.

Forest Processes and Native Plants (Grades 3-12) Spring & Fall

See options below for hikes into the coniferous forest or aspen parklands which provide opportunities for younger students to learn about photosynthesis, nutrient cycling, succession, disturbance, forest ecology, wildflowers, and Native American uses of both plants and wildlife. For high school students, the native plant program offers field trips on both east and west sides of the park to help with seed collecting, planting, and learning about native plant restoration.

West Side: Depending on the group age and time of year, a hike at the Trail of the Cedars can be combined with activities in the Avalanche Picnic Area or a visit to the native plant nursery.

East Side: In St. Mary, the Beaver Pond Loop Trail, the St. Mary Falls Trail, and the Sun Point Trail, are excellent for student activities exploring forests, as well as the Autumn Creek Trail at Marias Pass and the South Shore Trail at Two Medicine.

Earth Science Hikes (Grades 5-12) Spring & Fall



The Avalanche & Lake McDonald Valleys (east side of the park), and the Grinnell Glacier Valley (west side of the park), provide evidence of a range of geologic processes that have shaped the landscape. Rangers lead students on full-day hikes on trails in these areas and explore mountain building, glaciations, rocks and minerals, erosion, and soil formation.

Fire Ecology (Grades 4-8) Spring & Fall	Students will consider the history of fire in Glacier and its important role as a natural process.	
	West Side: Students watch demonstrations of fire behavior, view the Robert Fire from a distance and then see it up close as they hike the Rocky Point Trail.	East Side: A hike on the Red Eagle Lake trail will allow students visiting the east side of the park to see how the area is changing since the fire.
Winter Ecology (Grades 1-12) Jan. - Mar.	All winter ecology programs on both east and west sides of the parks include snowshoe hikes. Depending on the age of the group and the area visited, they may also explore properties of snow, see a winter puppet show, look for animal tracks, build snow caves, or take measurements of snow depth and density.	
Typical Field Trip Schedules	No two school programs are exactly alike, but the following represents a typical schedule. If your school is closer to the park, or has earlier or later dismissal times, this schedule can be adjusted. Make sure to consider adequate travel time (especially if there is inclement weather) for your park visit.	
	9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Bus arrives
	10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Park ranger introduction and the National Park Service mission
	10:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Session 1 of ranger-led activities
	11:30 – 12:00 p.m.	Lunch and clean-up
	12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Session 2 of ranger-led activities
	1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Concluding activity and final assessment
	1:30 - 1:45 p.m.	Bus departs
Scheduling a Field Trip	<p>We are currently accepting reservations for the 2007-2008 school year. Fall programs begin on September 10, 2007 and end on October 17, 2007. Winter programs begin on January 7, 2008 and end on March 14, 2008 (weather permitting). Spring programs begin on May 1, 2008 and end on June 6, 2008. Call soon, as dates fill up quickly! To arrange a park visit, please contact Laura Law, Glacier Education Specialist, at 406-888-5837, or email laura_law@nps.gov. Program availability is first-come, first-served and programs fill quickly.</p> <p>Group size is generally limited to 60 students plus at least 6 adults but may be fewer on days when ranger staffing is limited (40 students for snowshoeing). When you call to schedule your visit, be prepared to discuss your field trip objectives and the topic you want to focus on. You will need to provide a contact phone number, email address, group size, school address, approximate park arrival and departure times, and the date you are interested in. It's a good idea to have alternate trip dates in mind in case your first choice is taken.</p>	
Classroom Visits and Educational Trunks	<p>During the school year, park staff may be available to visit your classroom and discuss topics relevant to your curriculum and Glacier National Park. Power Point presentations and hands-on-items (skins and skulls) are available for classroom programs.</p> <p>Educational trunks and materials are available for loan. The wolf and bear educational trunks contain pelts, skulls, activities, story books, and other items to use in your classroom to help your students learn about these amazing creatures (recommended for K-6 grade). We also have a collection of 7 mammals skulls available for loan and a "Birdsong Kit." The Fire-Works trunk has many hands-on lessons and labs for learning about the science of fire (www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr65.html). The trunks/materials must be picked up and returned to West Glacier. To schedule a classroom visit, or to borrow a kit, contact Laura Law at 406-888-5837, or email Laura_Law@nps.gov at least two weeks in advance.</p>	
Glacier Institute	The Glacier Institute is a nonprofit organization providing quality outdoor education to people of all ages through exceptional field and science-based learning experiences. Two facilities, Glacier Park Field Camp and Big Creek Outdoor Education Center, are staffed by experienced naturalists and offer overnight accommodations to school groups participating in Institute courses. Field Camp is open April until October, and Big Creek is open year-round. Please contact the Glacier Institute Office at 406-755-1211 or visit their website at www.glacierinstitute.org .	
Concessions	Tour companies that operate in the park occasionally offer reduced rates for school groups. Call each company for updated information and pricing: Glacier Park Boat Company, 406-247-2429; Sun Tours, 1-800-786-9220 or 406-226-9220; Glacier Park Inc. (Red Jammer Buses), 406-892-6721.	